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HOUSING FOR RECEIVING PRINTED CIRCUIT BOARDS WHOSE COMPONENTS FORM AT LEAST PARTS OF A COMMUNICATION SYSTEM**CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS**

[0001] This application is the US National Stage of International Application No. PCT/EP2004/006103, filed June 7, 2004 and claims the benefit thereof. The International Application claims the benefits of German application No. 10336610.5 DE filed August 8, 2003, both of the applications are incorporated by reference herein in their entirety.

FIELD OF INVENTION

[0002] The invention relates to a housing for receiving printed circuit boards whose components form at least parts of a communication system, with a housing cover and a connection area accessible from the outside, with a main printed circuit board being arranged between a base housing part and a cover part and plug-in devices being provided in an expansion area of the main printed circuit board for at least one extension circuit board.

BACKGROUND OF INVENTION

[0003] Housings for receiving printed circuit boards equipped with components are known in various embodiments. With a housing which is used for termination units of a communication system there is frequently the demand for the basic structural design to be able to be expanded for different terminals. A telecommunications device can for example be arranged in its basic design for two S0 exchange ports and four analog subscriber lines. In an expanded capacity stage the system should be able to be expanded for further system terminations. The housing is expanded by fitting additional analog and/or digital subscriber interfaces in the form of extension cards which are connected by means of plug-in devices to the main printed circuit board of the communication system. This means that space must be provided within the housing for these extension cards which must be accessible to authorized persons but not accessible to the user. On the other hand a connection area must be provided in the housing which is easy to open for

the user, to enable his subscriber termination units to be connected to the communication system.

[0004] Termination units of a telecommunications system are manufactured in high volumes and the housing must be as simple and as cheap as possible to manufacture.

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

[0005] An underlying object of the invention is to specify a housing of this type so that it is cheaper to manufacture and is designed so that the space for fitting extension components is exclusively accessible to authorized persons, whereas for adding system termination units, it is a simple matter to access a connection area.

[0006] This object is achieved by the features of the independent claim. Advantageous embodiments, aspects and details of the invention are produced by the independent claims, the description and the enclosed drawings.

[0007] In accordance with the invention, with a housing of the type mentioned at the start, the extension area is covered by a first hood which locks onto the base part with a tool being required to release the lock connection. Access to the extension area is thus restricted to persons with authorization to perform service or maintenance work. Push-through openings are provided in a wall of the first hood adjoining the connection area. In an assembled state these push through openings correspond with plug-in devices on extension printed circuit boards which are plugged into the extension area on the main printed circuit board. This makes it possible to connect system terminations from the outside.

[0008] A preferred version of the housing is one in which, to cover the connection area, a second hood is provided, which can be attached to the base housing part by means of a releasable snap-in connection. No tool is required to release the snap-in connection. The second hood can easily be removed by hand from the base housing part.

[0009] It is useful for the base housing part to feature supports extending to the main printed circuit board. This construction simply holds the main printed circuit board by clamping it between the supports and the lowered hood part.

[0010] In an especially preferred embodiment plug-in devices are provided on the end face of the main printed circuit board, by means of which an electrical connection can be established with at least one second extension printed circuit board. This second extension printed circuit board also features plug-in devices which are accessible from the connection area. This enables the subscriber line interfaces to be expanded in a simple manner.

[0011] Advantageously push-through openings are arranged in a wall section of the first hood towards the connection area which are provided with a starting bevel. The starting bevel makes it easier to put the first hood on and the gap to the connector of an extension printed circuit board can be dimensioned to be narrower.

[0012] As regards the cost of manufacturing it is especially useful for the cover part, the first and/or second cover to be manufactured by moulding, preferably from a plastic.

[0013] An attractive form of the housing is characterized by the fact that the first and the second hood form a convex curve in a central area running concentrically to the longitudinal center axis.

[0014] In this case it is preferable that in the assembled state, the first hood and the second hood adjoin the side wall sections of the cover part to form a continuous surface.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0015] The invention will now be explained in greater detail on the basis of a preferred exemplary embodiment with reference to the enclosed drawings. The figures show:

- Figure 1 the housing in accordance with the invention in an assembled state in a perspective view.
- Figure 2 the inventive housing of Figure 1, with the second cover removed and the connection area visible
- Figure 3 the inventive housing of Figure 2 in which the first hood is shown in a raised position.
- Figure 4 the inventive housing of Figure 1 in an exploded view.
- Figure 5 the first hood seen from the inside.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF INVENTION

[0016] Figure 1 shows the inventive housing 1 in an assembled state. The housing contains electronic components of a telecommunications system. It essentially consists of a base housing part 2 and a housing cover 3. The housing cover 3 consists of a cover 4, a first hood 5 and a second hood 6. In its assembled state the housing 1 is essentially rectangular in shape. The cover 4 and the two hoods 5 and 6 are grouped symmetrically around the longitudinal center axis 10. As can be easily seen from the perspective view, the housing 1 features a convex curved front center surface 20 running concentrically to the longitudinal center axis 10. The sides of the front center surface 20 are adjoined by the wall sections 15 of the cover part 4 and wall sections 16 of the second hood 6. The front center surface 20 forming a forwards-facing convex curve forms a continuous transition surface to the front surfaces of the side wall sections 15 and 16, which gives the housing 1 an attractive exterior form.

[0017] Figure 2 shows the inventive housing 1 in a view in which the second hood 6 is removed, which allows the connection area 11 to be seen. The connection area 11 lies in a profiled recess extending backwards from the front side of the housing. In the connection area 11 different plug-in devices 24, 32, 33 for electrical connection of system terminations can be seen.

[0018] The view shown in Figure 3 differs from that shown in Figure 2 in that the first hood 5 is shown in a raised position. This reveals the extension area 12 with the extension printed circuit board 18. The recess of the cover part 4 continues into the extension area 12 and is broken through by plug-in openings 13. The plug-in openings 13 allow plug-in devices 23 to be seen which are accommodated on the main printed circuit board 8. Extension circuit boards 18 are plugged into the plug-in devices 23; The drawing of Figure 3 for example shows four plugged-in extension circuit boards 18. The extension circuit boards 18 are held on one of their bottom edges in guides 19 of the cover part 4. Each extension circuit board 18 features plug-in devices 24 on a side facing towards the connection area 11. The plug-in devices 24 are intended for the connection of user-side terminations and are accessible from the connection area 11.

[0019] Figure 4 shows an exploded view of the inventive housing 1. The

communication system is now assembled so that the main printed circuit board 8 is placed on a surrounding support edge 22 of the base housing part 2 and the cover part 4 is placed on it (the guides 7 are used to guide the circuit board and the cover part 4 on assembly). When the cover part 4 is lowered, the locking clips 29 are deflected by the base part 2. In a lowered position of the cover part 4 the locking clips 29 engage in corresponding locking tabs of the cover 4. In the locked state the main printed circuit board 8 is clamped between the base housing part 2 and the cover part 4. The sequence then continues with the first hood 5 being put on, the attachment tabs 9 being inserted and connected by means of the connection 39 (Fig. 3) to the cover part 4. The clip connection 39 can be released again by the maintenance personnel of the communication system using a tool such as a screwdriver. However the mounting area 12 (Fig. 3) of the extension circuit board 18 remains inaccessible for the user. After the first hood 5 has been fitted, the second hood 6 is installed in a last step of assembly. This involves pushing the hood 6 onto the connection area in the direction of the arrow 31 and latching it by means of snap-in hook 37 (Fig. 5) to cover part 4. This is done by turning it counterclockwise and does not require a mechanical tool. The twist locks 21 assist in latching in the hood 6. This construction allows the second hood 6 to be easily removed manually and makes the connection area easily accessible from the user side.

[0020] The rear wall of the base housing part 2 features cutouts 26 in its edge area to which the incoming and outgoing lines can be attached, by cable ties for example. The keyhole-shaped slot 25 is used for wall mounting of the housing 1. To cover plug-in locations which are not being used, break-out parts are provided which can be broken out from the opening depending on the capacity stage. The exemplary embodiment shown has four mounting locations for sub-modules, each of which has an accessible interface area available. The fifth mounting location is used to accept shorter modules with no interface to the outside.

[0021] As the exploded diagram of Figure 4 shows, plug-in devices 17 are provided on the face of the main printed circuit board 8 by means of which the main printed circuit board 8 is electrically connected to further extension circuit boards 28. The sides of these extension circuit boards 28 are plugged into the main printed circuit board 8 and they run essentially in the plane of the main printed circuit board surface 27. This enables an

analog subscriber line interface 32 to be expanded in an expanded capacity stage into a digital subscriber interface 33 (Fig. 2).

[0022] Fig. 5 shows the second hood 6 viewed from the direction of the connection area. When the hood 6 is put on the twist locks 21 are introduced into the corresponding cutouts in the first hood 5. As the hood 6 is lowered, the snap hooks 37 latch into corresponding cutouts 38 of the cover part 4. These snap-in connections are released from outside by applying force to the side walls of the second hood 6 and do not require a tool to be used.

[0023] As can be seen from the above embodiment, the inventive housing essentially consists of four parts which are assembled using latches or snap-in hooks into a construction. The assembly is simple and possible in a comparatively short time. Expensive means of connection, such as screws for example, are not required. As regards the costs of manufacturing, a design of the housing made from plastic is very good. All parts of the housing cover 3, as well as the base housing part, can be manufactured at low cost using injection molding.

[0024] Naturally the invention is not restricted to use in a telecommunications system but can also be used for similar tasks in other areas or electrical engineering.

[0025] List of reference symbols used

- 1 Housing
- 2 Base housing part
- 3 Housing cover
- 4 Cover part
- 5 First hood
- 6 Second hood
- 7 Guides
- 8 Main printed circuit board
- 9 Insertion tab
- 10 Center longitudinal axis
- 11 Connection area
- 12 Extension area
- 13 First plug-in opening in 4
- 14 Second plug-in openings and in 5
- 15 side, front-side of the wall sections of 4
- 16 side, front-side of the wall section of 6
- 17 End face plug-in device
- 18 Extension circuit boards (subscriber)
- 19 Guides for 18
- 20 Convex curved front center surface
- 21 Twist locks
- 22 Support edge
- 23 First plug-in device

- 24 Second plug-in device
- 25 Cutout, keyhole-shaped
- 26 Recesses
- 27 Main printed circuit board surface
- 28 Extension printed circuit board (digital)
- 29 Latching spring on 2
- 30 Starting bevel
- 31 Arrow
- 32 Analog subscriber line termination
- 33 Digital subscriber line termination
- 36 Starting surfaces
- 37 Snap-in hooks of 6
- 38 Cutout in 4
- 39 Latching connection between 4 and 5